

UNCLAS AMMAN 005940

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: JORDANIAN AUTHORITIES CHARGE 15 IN ANOTHER TERRORIST PLOT

¶1. (U) In the second indictment against alleged terrorist plotters handed down in a month, Jordan's state security court formally charged 15 individuals with conspiring to carry out terrorist attacks against U.S. and Israeli targets worldwide, according to press reports on September 13. Military prosecutor Col. Mahmoud 'Ubaydat charged 13 Jordanians and two Iraqis affiliated with al-Qai'da and Ansar al-Islam with plotting to attack "tourists, foreigners and members of Jordan's security forces in the Kingdom," adding that members of the group received weapons and explosives training in Afghanistan and Iran.

¶2. (U) U.S. forces in northern Iraq on March 30 arrested one of the plotters, Jordanian national Ahmad Mahmud Salih al-Riyati, who was subsequently repatriated to Jordan. According to the charges, al-Riyati hatched the plot during a meeting in 1998 with Ra'ed Hijazi, a Jordanian American extremist sentenced to death by the state security court in February 2002 for "plotting to commit terrorist acts" against "Jews and U.S. interests" in Jordan during the millennium celebrations. Al-Riyati allegedly met Jordanian national and al-Qa'ida official Ahmad Fadil Nazzal al-Khalaylah (aka Abu Musab al-Zarqawi) in Afghanistan, who asked him to join Ansar al-Islam and to plan attacks against foreign tourists and Jordanian intelligence officials. Al-Riyati allegedly went to Iran in August 2001 to train other cell members to make explosives and poisons for attacks in Jordan.

¶3. (U) Reputed Ansar al-Islam leader Najmeddin Faraj Ahmad (aka Mullah Krekar) also is named in the indictment for allegedly agreeing to provide members of the group with weapons and material to make explosives. He also is believed to have met in mid-2002 with al-Zarqawi and Iraqi suspect Riya Saleh Abdallah, who agreed to provide weapons and bomb making materiel to the cell, according to the indictment. Unlike the other suspects who are believed to be in Iran, Krekar has had refugee status in Norway since 1991. Krekar is currently in Norway fighting expulsion. Authorities in the Netherlands arrested Krekar in September 2002 en route to Norway.

HALE